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ABSTRACT

The historical review places mainstreaming of exceptional children in the context of special education developments since World War II and recent legislation. The period since the War is noted to have produced an expansion of special education services. Among pressures described for changing the emphasis on special class placement are the influences of efficacy studies and behaviorism. Considered are aspects of special education's reorganization, including mainstreaming implementation factors, suggested models, and notes of caution. Stressed is the importance of intensive inservice training and diagnostic-prescriptive assistance for regular classroom teachers. (CL)

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OSSC BULLETIN

MAINSTREAMING: AN OVERVIEW AND UPDATE

by
Francis D. Higgins

**Oregon School Study Council
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FOREWORD

This Bulletin by Francis Higgins places the mainstreaming issue in historical perspective and offers a valuable update in light of recent legislation. It should prove an informative companion to Prehm's and Goldschmidt's earlier Bulletin, "Mainstreaming Handicapped Children and Related Legal Implications," (Dec.-Jan., 1974-75).

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Kenneth A. Erickson
Executive Secretary
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MAINSTREAMING: AN OVERVIEW AND UPDATE

When viewed in the total context of history, much has been accomplished in a relatively short time (serving the retarded). Professional services are less than 150 years old in Western Civilization and just over a century old in this country.

(Dunn, 1961, p. 13)

The Education of Exceptional Children: Historical Perspective

The education of the mentally retarded began about 1800. Early contributions to the field were made by physicians in the areas of psychological diagnosis and related educational programs. Prior to the Nineteenth Century, attitudes toward the mentally handicapped in the civilized world had ranged from elimination (Ancient Greeks and Romans) to ridicule (the Middle Ages) and to asylum and protection (Thirteenth Century onward under the influence of the Roman Catholic Church).

Jean Marc Itard, a French philosopher and physician of the 1800's had had experience with the training of the deaf, and decided that education and environment were the major factors in mental development. He initiated a comprehensive training program for which he became historically famous, and he undertook the re-education of a twelve-year-old, Victor, the "Wild Boy of Aveyron." Although in his own eyes he did not succeed, Itard was able to demonstrate the application of psychological principles to learning problems and, in particular, the importance of sensory training in educational development.

The originator of the idea and practice of institutional care for the mentally retarded was Johann Guggenbuhl, physician and director of an institution for cretins which he founded at Abenberg, Switzerland, in 1840. His objectives were unrealistic and led to the failure of the venture. At the same time, however, the program engendered considerable interest in the treatment of the retarded.

A student of Itard, Edward Seguin, also a physician, made significant contributions to the education of the mentally retarded during the Nineteenth Century, both philosophically and administratively. His approach was based on a neurophysiological method; his concerns were with the education of the whole child and the provision of individualized instruction based on the needs of the child. About 1850, Seguin migrated to the United States of America and, already recognized as a leader in the training of the mentally retarded, he was readily listened to. He encouraged the construction of a number of residential schools and the development of systematic training programs. His influence was even more widespread when he became the first president of the organization currently known as the American Association of Mental Deficiency.

The first school for the mentally retarded in the United States had been established prior to Seguin's arrival. Samuel Howe, director of the Perkins Institution for the Blind, Boston, had gained legislative support and special funding, in 1848, for the opening of an experimental school for ten "idiotic children" in a wing of the Perkins Institution. It was successful and, subsequently, the school was put on a permanent footing as a separate institution. Howe had been impressed by the work of Guggenbuhl and Seguin in Europe; the latter joined Howe when he first

came to the United States. By 1900, residential schools were established in most of the states of New England, the Great Lakes Area, and in California, with a total number of patients approximating 14,000 (Dunn, 1961, p. 15) On November 30, 1896, the first special class for mentally defective children in the United States of America was opened in Providence, Rhode Island, under the auspices of the Superintendent of Schools. Additional classes were established in the next decade in thirteen cities including Springfield, Massachusetts, Chicago and Los Angeles. The formation of the classes caused some controversy as indicated by the jocular nature of an article, "The Fool Class," by a Providence newspaper reporter and the adverse publicity associated with it. (Kanner, 1964)

Developments in Special Education Since World War II

The development of the public education system, concern for the handicapped following World Wars I and II, and alarm at the number who were declined for military service because of illiteracy and mental defects caused renewed interest in the education of the mentally retarded from the 1920's onward.

The Expansion of Special Education Services

According to Dunn (1973), 23,000 mildly retarded pupils were enrolled in special day schools and classes in the United States in 1922. The number increased to 98,000 by 1940 and in 1953 was up to 109,000. There were dramatic increases in the following twenty years. For example, the 1963 figure was 361,000 and the 1973 (an estimate), 809,000.

For the last ten years, the percentage of mildly retarded children in residential special education facilities has been estimated at two percent or approximately 15,000.

During the period 1948-1973, there was a rapid increase in the number of moderately retarded pupils enrolled in special day schools and classes in local school systems. The figures ranged from 4,509 in 1948 to 30,022 in 1963 and to an estimated 70,000 in 1973; they represented respectively 7%, 27%, and 53% of the estimated number of moderately retarded pupils in the United States. Maximum prevalence estimates for pupils classified as mentally retarded, cited by Dunn (1973) from the U. S. Office of Education statistics are as follows:

Mild general learning disabilities (educable mental retardation) -----	1.5%
Moderate and severe general learning disabilities (trainable and severe mental retardation) -----	0.8%

Although there has been a dramatic increase during the last decade in the number of mentally retarded children enrolled in day school facilities, the figures have not matched the general rate of population increase in the nation. Oregon may be cited as one example of the trend to establish special education facilities for the "learning disabled" to a degree beyond that expected in relation to prevalence estimates.

By using a formula that included "prevalence rate for category," Prehm (1974) calculated that special schooling was being provided for 45.26% of the estimated 12,272 mentally retarded children in Oregon in 1972-73. The figure for those with learning disabilities was 7,000 "being served," but when compared with the total school population and

the "prevalence rate for category" was taken into account, the percentage served was 131.18%. The latter figure would reflect the concern of the community regarding children with reading difficulties. It might also suggest that some of the children may be suffering from a teaching, rather than a learning, disability.

The Questioning of Practices and Procedures

Hammill and Wiederholt (1972, p. 4) describe the system of special education that developed in the schools since the end of World War II as "refer, diagnose, label and place." It assumed that the teachers were highly trained in special procedures for the instruction of exceptional children, and that the low teacher-pupil ratio in the special class would permit individualized instruction. Overall, the system assumed that admission to such a class was sufficient in itself to make appropriate educational provision for those labeled "retarded," "disturbed," or "handicapped."

Special educators began to fear that special classes were becoming the "dumping grounds" for regular class failures and that teachers in "normal" classes were shirking their responsibilities in this regard. Dunn (1968, p. 5) commented on the establishment of self-contained classes "as a method of transferring 'misfits' out of a regular grade." Efficacy studies of special classes versus regular grades have been carried out since the early 1930's. Although a number of authors in the field of special education have been quick to seize on the results of some studies to support their contention that the special class system has failed, there has not been conclusive empirical evidence to

decide the issue in definite terms. Kirk (1964) reviewed a number of studies carried out between 1932 and 1961. He was critical of them for a number of methodological reasons and concluded that "until we obtain well-controlled studies of a longitudinal nature, our opinions about the benefits or detriments of special classes will remain partly in the realm of conjecture." (Kirk, 1964, p. 63)

However, the studies suggested that special classes did not offer distinctive educational benefits and their retention was brought into question. A well-controlled longitudinal study of Goldstein, Moss and Jordan (1965), conducted over a period of four years, showed no significant differences in the reading standards of educable mentally retarded pupils in either classroom setting; the study did not weaken the argument of those who sought alternative systems for assisting children with learning problems.

The most recent review of the studies on this issue concluded as follows:

In summary, studies of the efficacy of special class placement suggest that the educable retarded child does at least as well academically if allowed to remain in the regular class. The humanitarian's plea that the retarded child's social and personal adjustment will be better if he is placed in a special class without frustrating pressure also has not been empirically validated.

(Filler, 1975)

Concomitant with this questioning of established practices have been pressures from influential parental and professional organizations for improved educational opportunities for handicapped children. In some instances this has led to litigation and favorable court decisions that, in turn, have influenced state legislative bodies.

An often-cited article, by L. M. Dunn (1968), regarding special education for minority children labeled as "educationally mentally retarded," acted as a catalyst in formulating new ways to educate children with learning difficulties. Various models have been developed to provide educational services to these children.

Some of Dunn's statements have been misconstrued, however, particularly by those educators who sought the abolition of self-contained special classes. He stated:

We are not arguing that we do away with our special education programs for the moderately and severely retarded, for other types of more handicapped children or for the multiply handicapped.

(1968, p. 6)

Dunn's major concern was to effect a change in the educational programs for socioculturally deprived slow-learning children. He presented a comprehensive rationale and outlined new procedures that could be adopted. His claim that "the overwhelming evidence is that our present and past practices have their major justification in removing pressures on regular teachers and pupils themselves" (1968, p. 6) has been rightly contested because of the inconclusive nature of the research studies in this field. There has been general agreement, however, with the need for the review of past practices and for greater precision in teaching strategies and the evaluation of student achievement.

Following the publication of Dunn's paper, there have been many similar articles in which the assumptions underlying special education programs have been attacked and identification and assessment procedures strongly criticized. Lilly (1970) cites criticisms, made during the preceding decade by leaders in the field of special education, of

practices that had been adopted and attitudes that had developed in education generally towards special education. Concern was expressed by these critics on matters such as:

- (a) The failure of special classes to improve the basic skills of mentally handicapped pupils above those of similar pupils in the normal stream;
- (b) The emphasis on categories and organizational designs that made special education "special" and attended to it a degree of isolationism and mysticism;
- (c) Grouping, on the basis of medically derived disability labels that had no practical utility for schools and was basically nothing more than a refusal to accept responsibility for making educational decisions;
- (d) Special education had become the "dumping ground" of general education to the disadvantage of the children concerned; and
- (e) "Special education is part of the arrangement for culling out students. It has helped to erect a parallel system which permits relief of institutional guilt and humiliation stemming from the failure to achieve competence and effectiveness in the task given to it by society."

(1970, p. 46)

Doubts concerning the assumed advantages of "homogeneous" grouping in special classes and of the "uniqueness" of the specialized curriculum for the mentally retarded are referred to by Bruininks and Rynders (1971). The tendency to consider group, rather than individual educational needs had been found in many special classes; there could be no certainty that the degree of individualized instruction would be greater than that in the regular class. "The conclusions of Simches and Bohn (who reviewed over 250 curriculum guides for mentally retarded children) suggest that the assumption of differentiated, carefully sequenced curricula for mentally retarded pupils was rarely implemented in special class programs." (Bruininks and Rynders, 1971, p. 61)

The use of the results of an intelligence test as the main criterion for admission to a special class has been criticized by MacMillan (1971) and Hammill (1972). The problems of emotional and motivational variables which may affect performance on a test and, in particular, the use of tests designed for middle-class white populations with children from minority groups have caused major concern. The classification of a poorly achieving child as "mentally retarded" on the basis of an intelligence test and the actual practice of labeling, per se, have been severely criticized.

The issues in the classification and labeling of exceptional children are considered in a comprehensive study directed by Nicholas Hobbs (1975 a). The report (Hobbs, 1975 b) refers to the limitations of labels and categories with respect to exceptional children; the stigmatizing effects of labeling; the expectations of teachers of children in particular categories; and the dearth of information of educational significance that categorization brings. As an alternative to the classification of children, the committee headed by Hobbs recommended the adoption of a constructive interaction adaptation system in which the behavior of children would be classified and there would be a direct link between assessment and instruction. (Hobbs, 1975 a) A specific recommendation was that:

Teachers must be trained to deal with categories of behavior, not categories of children, and to view retardation as reversible rather than static.

(Hobbs, 1975 a, p. 228)

Other Pressures for Change

Influences from outside the field of special education have brought considerable pressure for change in educating exceptional children. Prehm (1974) cites humanism, behaviorism, administrative dissatisfaction and judicial/legislative mandates as significant, and in some cases powerful, forces in the review of established practices in the education of these children. Humanism emphasizes personal dignity, the rights of the individual to full development in keeping with his potential abilities and his talents, and the treatment of a person as an individual rather than as a label.

The influences of behaviorism, and its basic tenet that all children are able to learn, are being increasingly recognized in education. Behaviorists have developed techniques for the instruction of children to attain determined objectives based on the level of achievement and the needs of the children. Schools are being challenged to develop a variety of programs and instructional methods in order to educate all children.

Administrators have been dissatisfied with the dictates of funding agencies with regard to providing services for exceptional children. Districts have been faced with only one or two alternatives if they were to receive reimbursement for the facilities offered. There has been pressure from these administrators for increased freedom in organizational planning for handicapped children.

The Impact of Judicial and Legislative Decisions

The greatest and most direct impact on administrative decision-making in the organization of special education has come from the

judicial and/or legislative mandates. They have asserted the right of handicapped children to receive an education in the least restrictive environment.

In the last five years, most of the changes affecting a student's rights at school have emanated from or been stimulated by the courts.

(Goldschmidt, 1975, p. 14)

The courts are concerned with the role of schools in the maintenance of democracy and their success with students.

(Goldschmidt, 1975, p. 18)

Parents of mentally retarded pupils have contested in the courts the assumptions that handicapped children cannot learn, that these children should be denied placement in a public school and, further, that it is too expensive to provide special programs for them. These issues were raised by the Pennsylvania Association of Retarded Citizens in a federal district court action in 1971 against the State of Pennsylvania. The parents invoked the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution which requires that, if the state provides a publicly supported program of education, it must be made available to all on an equal basis. They showed that inappropriate tests and labels had resulted in incorrect placement of children or the exclusion of some of them from school altogether. Their argument that it was financially more economical to educate retarded students in public schools than to provide institutionalization or welfare assistance was not refuted.

The Pennsylvania State Board of Education and the local school board defendants agreed to provide handicapped students with an equal educational opportunity. Provision was made also for the implementation

of due process hearings under which the school authority has to show the appropriateness of its proposed placement for a child before an independent hearing examiner. (At the hearing, the parents may submit their own evidence on the student's program needs prepared by an independent evaluator at the expense of the school.)

Another landmark court action was *Mills v. the Board of Education* in the federal district court in Washington, D. C. In this instance the court reached similar decisions to those in the Pennsylvania case but, on this occasion, the plaintiffs included students with physical, behavioral and emotional handicaps. The outcome of the case meant that all children in Washington, D. C., must have access to a public school and an appropriate educational program.

In the above-mentioned judicial mandates, "the courts assumed that the most appropriate placement for all students is the 'normal heterogeneous' classroom and, in declining order thereafter, placement in a resource center program, self-contained classroom, home instruction and institution." (Goldschmidt, 1974, p. 25) All of the concerns about special education practices mentioned in the preceding pages, together with the pressures for change and the influence of court decrees, appear to have been met in the most recent federal legislation.

On November 29, 1975, the President signed into law Senate Bill 6, the "Education for All Handicapped Children Act." The Senate Bill is now Public Law 94-142 and its formula for financial assistance to state educational agencies and school districts will come into operation in the 1978 fiscal year. It stipulates that all handicapped children, aged three to twenty-one years, may enjoy the special education and

related services provided through this measure. P.L. 94-142 dictates a number of requirements to be adhered to by both state and school district authorities. They include:

- (a) assurance of extensive child identification procedures;
- (b) assurance of "full service" goal and detailed timetable;
- (c) a guarantee of complete due process procedures;
- (d) the assurance of regular parent or guardian consultation;
- (e) maintenance of programs and procedures for comprehensive personnel development including in-service training;
- (f) assurance of special education being provided to all handicapped children in the "least restrictive" environment;
- (g) assurance of nondiscriminatory testing and evaluation;
- (h) assurance of the maintenance of an individualized program for all handicapped children;
- (i) assurance of an effective policy guaranteeing the right of all handicapped children to a free, appropriate public education, at no cost to parents and/or guardian.

There are two additional features pertinent to this study of the mainstreaming of exceptional children:

1. The Law limits to 12% of the total school-age population those to be considered as handicapped and, further, specifies that not more than one-sixth of those deemed handicapped (or 2% of the total school population) may be children with specific learning disabilities.
2. "P.L. 94-142 orders a statistically valid survey of the effectiveness of individualized instruction as mandated in the legislation. P.L. 94-142 also orders the U. S. Commissioner to conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of educating handicapped children in the least restrictive environment and orders the Commissioner to evaluate the effectiveness of procedures to prevent erroneous classification of children."

(Insight, 12/75, p. 5)

Reorganization of Special Education Services

Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming has emerged as the organizational answer to judicial and legislative dictates that "the least restrictive environment" be provided for handicapped children, and as a solution for meeting professional and parental pressures for change.

What is 'mainstreaming'? The concept has been interpreted in a number of ways. The extreme interpretations extend from the "integration" of special classes into a school by providing classrooms for them in the same building as those for non-handicapped children to abolishing all special classes and absorbing handicapped pupils in the school into classes on an age-grade basis. Between these extremes are endeavors to place handicapped children into the same programs as non-handicapped students, but with assistance provided by resource teachers and other specialists to help maintain progress and to prevent failure.

Birch (1974) defines mainstreaming as "a carefully designed, balanced and individualized quid pro quo teaching arrangement beneficial to children with a variety of kinds of school problems." (1974, p. 10)

Prehm (1974) sees mainstreaming as referring primarily to "assigning handicapped children to the regular grades to receive their education." He sees mainstreamed handicapped children as those "who receive both regular and special services to the regular grades." (p. 6) He considers that the degree of mainstreaming in respect of a child will depend upon the severity of the child's handicap and the amount of time spent in the regular classroom, which, in turn, will depend upon the

nature of the specialist resource facilities available. Prehm's definition of a handicapped child is highly significant in this context:

A handicapped child is one whose skill levels are below the skill levels of his cultural and/or ethnic group age peers.

(1974, p. 2)

The emphasis in the definition is on the level of performance of the child in skills of the type that are basic to school curricula, e.g., "survival" skills. There is no delineation of the category in which the child should be placed in terms of his handicap. The definition reflects the attitude that the attainment level of a child is a function of both his biological handicap and the extent to which he has been taught. A mildly handicapped child is one who has exhibited "small, but significant, deviations in one or more skill areas or an extreme deviation in only one skill area." (Prehm, 1974, p. 3) A severely handicapped child is one who exhibits "deviation from his cultural/age peers in three or more skill areas." (Prehm, 1974, p. 3) Prehm considers that handicapped children who will enter the mainstream will come from the mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed and learning disabled categories.

The Implementation of Mainstreaming

Proposals for implementing mainstreaming programs have been presented by an increasing number of authors. The following underlying assumptions have been expressed by Prehm (1974):

- (a) Special education is a basic element of the school program and not a supplementary part of it.
- (b) Mainstreaming can occur at any level of schooling, from pre-school to secondary.

- (c) Mainstreaming is not for everybody—it is not for every school, nor every teacher, nor every child.
- (d) Mainstreaming is an integral part of a more comprehensive system for delivering services to exceptional or handicapped children.

Some very practical and logical comments about mainstreaming, all of which are supportive of Prehm's contentions, have been made by Reger (1974). Reger points out that if mainstreaming is considered to be simply a return to the normal classroom without basic changes in the programming, the children will be "put back into the very failure situations which led to their specialized placements." (1974, p. 58)

Reger (1974, pp. 58-59) lists a number of principles that he considers to be involved in mainstreaming. They include:

- (1) No child should be categorized with a label reflecting a gross diagnostic category.
- (2) Children should be evaluated with relevant instruments to determine those areas of strength and weakness that relate directly to specific, objective instructional actions.
- (3) Groupings of all children in the school should be based on defined needs. For children with special needs, as many additional support services as possible should be provided, both directly to the children and to their teachers.
- (4) Diagnostic and prescriptive services for children with special needs are not enough. Such services should be tied directly to implementation services, and, whenever possible, the same personnel who provide diagnostic and prescriptive services should also implement the instructional program, in cooperation with other teachers.
- (5) Consultation services to teaching personnel should have direct application to the instructional program, providing materials to use, techniques to try and management strategies.

- (6) Some children with severe disabilities will have to be grouped together for at least part of their day, if for no other reason than that they cannot be placed to their advantage with non-handicapped children. Such groupings should be based on individual performance criteria, not on gross and irrelevant non-educational diagnostic categories.
- (7) The leadership of the school, from the superintendent to the building principal and president of the teachers' organization, should work together on total program implementation. Needs for teacher in-service training should evolve out of the perceptions and experiences of the teachers themselves, not be poured in, uninvited, from 'experts.'

Suggested Models

A model for full implementation of educational services for the handicapped is that developed by Deno (1970). It is known as the "Cascade System" and it sets out seven levels of educational organization for handicapped children from Level I - those able to achieve adequately in the normal classroom, to Level VII - those requiring a residential setting. Dunn (1973) has developed the model to include eleven administrative plans which provide for four types of exceptional pupils:

- | | |
|----------|--|
| Type I | Enrolled in a regular day class using special instructional materials. |
| Type II | Enrolled in a regular day class but receiving part-time instruction in another setting (resource room, special day class). |
| Type III | Special self-contained class or school. No academic instruction in a regular day class. |
| Type IV | Special residential school or home instruction. |

It is anticipated that this model will form the basis of planning for most educational systems. Three other models have been proposed either as the bases of alternative educational systems for handicapped children or for the improvement of current practices.

Lilly (1971) outlines the Training-Based Model for providing services to exceptional children in the regular classroom. He introduces the concept of a "zero-reject system" which places the responsibility for failure on the teacher and the educational program rather than on the child. The model features the development of the classroom teacher to a stage where she can handle all of the behavioral and academic problems of her class. The training aspect of this model is provided by an instructional specialist "whose function would be to instruct the teacher in ways to handle the referred problem, as well as other identifiable problems within the regular classroom. At no time during the period of service would the instructional specialist remove a child from the classroom for individual work whether it be of a diagnostic or tutorial nature, for this practice in no way contributes to preparing the teacher to perform this function in the future." (p. 746) Lilly envisages an ideal situation in which competent classroom teachers do not need special education support.

Because of Lilly's concern about the efficacy of some special education programs and the periods spent by mildly handicapped children in special classes, Gallagher (1972) proposed the Special Education Contract Model. Under this Model, parents and school officials would enter into a formal contract before a child is admitted to special education services. The contract would specify the goals to be attained during the program and the minimum time, less than two years, for a review of progress. The contract would be " . . . nonrenewable, or renewable only under a quasi-judicial type of hearing, with the parents represented by legal or child advocate counsel." (p. 532)

In answer to Lilly's (1971) training-based model, Adamson and Van Etten (1972) suggested a "fail-save" model which incorporates some aspects of Lilly's training proposals but includes several alternatives, not unlike those in Deno's Cascade of Services (1970). In the fail-save model:

The 'fail' represents the system's failure to meet all children's needs, not the child's. The 'save' represents the adaptation of the system to the child's individual needs to 'save' him. (p. 736)

This model proposes:

1. When a regular classroom teacher is concerned about the progress of a child, a methods and material consultant observes and evaluates the child's work in the classroom over a period of ten weeks. Advice is given to the teacher on strategies and materials.
2. The parents, teacher, administrator and consultant meet at the end of the ten-week period to determine whether:
 - (a) the child will be retained in the initial treatment stage for a further ten weeks, or
 - (b) will be referred to a resource classroom for a period not exceeding ninety days. (Specialist teaching is provided in the resource classroom for part of each day.)

Conferences are held at the end of a ten-week or ninety-day period depending on the placement of a child. If a child is in a resource classroom/regular class placement the evaluation conference will decide whether:

- (a) the child will be returned to the ten-week cycle; or
- (b) will remain in the current program for a further ninety days; or
- (c) will be transferred to a special class/resource room placement for a maximum of nine months.

Admission to category (c) requires evaluation review no later than nine months after admission to the program. The child may be returned

to the resource room/regular class program or be referred for special-class placement. If the latter decision is made, the child must automatically be returned to a resource-room program after two years.

The consultant plays a vital role in this model, not only in terms of evaluation of the child's attainments and diagnosis of needs, but also to ensure that there is continuity in the individualized program that is developed for the child. Without this monitoring, the child, after one or two changes of placement, could start to "sink" rather than be "saved."

Chaffin (1974) makes reference to thirty different alternative systems for special education services to exceptional children. Although the basic philosophies of the programs are similar, a survey revealed a wide range of differences in administrative organization, from open classroom to resource room arrangements. The use of special education personnel varied from that of members of a teaching team, to the provision of diagnostic/prescriptive strategies, to child study services and to the resource teacher model.

A non-categorical resource room is included in a design by Hammill and Wiederholt (1972) for the provision of special education services to a school. The model includes regular classes, non-categorical resource rooms, self-contained classes (separate categories of handicap, e.g., educable mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, visually impaired, etc.) and categorical resource rooms (speech, remedial reading, auditorially impaired, visually impaired).

The non-categorical resource room is intended to meet the educational needs of any child from a regular class or special class having

difficulty in school work or adjustment. In this model, the self-contained classes serve those children who cannot be integrated into the regular class even with the help of the resource room teacher. Children may be moved from the special class into the resource room on a part-time basis as preparation for transfer to the regular class; the resource room would become an avenue for remedial help after entry into the regular class. Hammill and Wiederholt (1972) see the retention of the self-contained special class for those children who are too severely retarded to take their place in the regular class. This model has much to commend it, for the emphasis is on educational need and not diagnostic label. It offers a flexible structure for the placement of children based on regular and frequent assessments of performance levels.

Special mention was made by Chaffin (1974) of a mainstreaming project on a district basis in Fountain Valley, California. The instructional environment involved team teaching, differentiated staffing (learning coordinators) and individualized planning for the 11,000 children in the seventeen elementary (K-8) schools. In each school every 6-8 classrooms were clustered around a Learning Center. The Learning Coordinator for each center was responsible for some individual and small group instruction but also for coordinating the planning and instructional activities of the classroom teachers and support staff of the cluster team. Each school had at least one special education resource teacher and the services of a speech teacher and psychologist.

A much-publicized program featuring "readiness for regular classroom functioning" is the Madison School Plan developed by F. M. Hewett and colleagues in Santa Monica Schools, California.

5
This plan attempts to bring hard-of-hearing, blind, educable mentally retarded, learning disability and emotionally disturbed children into a single school and to provide them with a combination resource room - integrated regular classroom experience without grouping or according to single categories.

(Hewett, 1971, p. 100)

This approach groups children according to their readiness for regular classroom functioning and provides individualized programs in instruction and behavioral management. Students may pass through three stages, Pre-academic I, Pre-academic II and Academic I before entering Academic II, which is full-time enrollment in the regular classroom.

Evaluation of Programs

The value of various alternatives to self-contained classrooms for the exceptional will not be known until rigorous research studies are made. Problems such as the randomization of subjects into treatment groups, sample size, and adequate control of the teacher variables, generally present major difficulties. For example, Sabatino's study (1971), which evaluated resource rooms for children with learning disabilities as an alternative to placement in a self-contained class, concluded in favor of the resource room; however, the sample of teachers was limited to three, one teacher of a self-contained class and two resource room teachers. Other studies cited in the literature on provision of educational facilities for exceptional children have a similar problem of sample size with the human variables.

The most promising research study on the effectiveness of alternative special education instructional services is Project PRIME—Programmed Reentry into Mainstream Education (Kaufman, Semmel and Agard, 1974).

The study seeks answers to a number of questions:

- (1) How effective is mainstreaming for mildly handicapped children, for whom is it successful and under what conditions?
- (2) What are the determinants of an effective educational program for handicapped children in the public schools?
- (3) What are the factors that promote children's development in the academic, social and emotional spheres?

School districts implementing the Texas Comprehensive Special Education Program for Exceptional Children in the years 1971-72 and 1972-73 have been involved in the study which has included 650 classrooms (461 regular classroom teachers and 189 special education teachers) and over 2,000 non-handicapped and handicapped children, including 686 educable mentally retarded and 360 learning disabled. At this stage the preliminary results do not appear to have been published.

Some Notes of Caution

Some special educators have cautioned against the casting aside of special education services in favor of the movement towards the mainstreaming of handicapped children. They express timely concern and warnings that "mainstreaming," "integration," "normalization," or whatever the return of handicapped children to the regular classroom may be termed, alone will not be the panacea that may be wished for and that special education services of high quality will be required.

In a lengthy paper, "The False Hope of Integration," William M. Cruikshank (1974) states that integration is:

- (a) "impregnated at the most with the reality of failure" (p. 67),

(b) "the wishful thinking of unknowing administrators" (p. 75),
and

(c) "a token recognition of a contemporary fad" (p. 75).

He rightly expresses concern about the attitudes of regular classroom teachers towards exceptional children and their ability to meet the educational needs of these children. At the same time, he expresses regret at the lack of quality in special education as it has been practiced. The strengths of special education, according to Cruikshank are:

- (1) It is deficit oriented.
- (2) It ceases to attempt to mirror the regular elementary school classroom; its focus is on specific problems related to educational and learning deficits.
- (3) Ideally, special education programs are based on definitive clinical diagnosis and assessment designed to identify the causes of problems.

Behaviorists who espouse the task-analytic approach to remedy deficits would strongly oppose (3) above as a strength of special education; to them, the psychological causal approach has been a major weakness of remediation programs.

Later in the paper, Cruikshank modifies his attitude by supporting the concept of "return to the regular grades" for children in special classes who have shown their readiness to do so. He considers that such transfers should take place and will eventuate when the quality of instruction in special education classes is improved. One wonders whether Cruikshank overlooked Deno's Cascade System, for it is based on the assumption that special education resources of quality will be available and deficits will be identified and remedied. Presumably he would support Adamson and Van Etten's (1972) fail-save model.

MacMillan (1971) raises the very critical issue of the competency of teachers, in both regular and special education. Like Cruikshank (1974), he sees a possible relationship between a teacher's inadequacies and the "failure" of a self-contained special class. To him, such "failures" may be attributable, not to the administrative arrangement, per se, but to the poor quality of instruction.

With regard to mainstreaming, he questions the ability of teachers to cope with a wider range of individual differences. His concern with the teacher centers on a practical issue of major importance; this teacher variable is often overlooked in the evaluation of a program or educational organization. He specifies the need for a competency-based model of instructional skills for teachers of the handicapped in the regular classroom and for supervision in the schools "to ensure that competencies taught are being developed and employed." (1971, p. 10) In addition, he warns that no one organizational model developed to assist the regular teacher should come to be accepted as the best way, and considers that there should be "a proliferation of different models all designed to provide for the accommodation of a wider range of individual differences in the regular class." (1971, p. 10)

The inflexibility of the grade system that operates in some elementary schools and "dooms many low-ability children to failure" (Iano, 1972, p. 173) would militate against the success of a mainstreaming program. Iano favors a flexible, ungraded organization that takes into account both achievement and social factors. He considers that special educators in the schools have to take the initiative in developing greater coordination of effort with general educators in the planning to integrate handicapped children into the school system.

The educational needs of severely and profoundly retarded children in relation to mainstreaming are reviewed by Smith and Arkans (1974). They state cogent arguments for the retention of special classes for these children and refer to:

- (a) the increasing number of severely and profoundly retarded children now living in communities rather than institutions;
- (b) the physical needs of these children that require additional staffing and special facilities;
- (c) the need for highly specialized training for the teacher; and
- (d) the life-long planning that is required for the education of the severely and profoundly retarded.

It is generally agreed that placement in the mainstream of education is not for these children.

The misinterpretation of "normalization" in relation to the retarded is of major concern to Throne (1975):

The normalization principle ignores the fact that by definition the retarded do not develop normally in response to normative procedures. For individuals to be correctly designated, retarded means retarded only after normative procedures have been tried and found wanting. (p. 23)

Throne sees the need for specialized procedures, "implying extraordinary conditions," to develop the retarded beyond that state and towards normality; the specialized procedures of treatment and training or teaching should receive priority if the retarded are to obtain maximum levels of development. His comments are timely for those general educators who assume that "exposure to the normal stream" is sufficient educational experience for the full growth of the retarded.

Summary

The foregoing overview indicates a consensus among special educators that there is a need to reassess the practices that have been established in the education of these children. There is not complete agreement, of course, on the principle of the integration of exceptional children into the normal stream, for questions such as "Who is to be integrated?" and "How is integration to take place?" would receive a variety of answers. Of course, each district and situation has its variables. It is obvious, however, that evaluation and accountability (to the parent and child) in special education are receiving higher priority as part of this process of reassessment.

Overshadowing the debates on the appropriate organizational structure for the education of these children are the judicial and legislative mandates that are shaping immediate educational programs and policies. Influences and pressures from outside the pedagogical field have joined with those from within it to cause a re-thinking of society's attitudes towards the education of those who "deviate from the norm." The legislative stipulations, together with the substantial funding that accompanies them, will force changes, particularly where there is reluctance to change.

It is reassuring to note that evaluation of the proposed changes is also mandated in the legislation. Cruikshank (1974), MacMillan (1971), Iano (1972), Smith and Arkans (1974) and Throne (1975) raise significant issues that, it is hoped, will not be overlooked by those anxious to return all exceptional children to the mainstream.

Conclusions

Underlying the proposals for the mainstreaming of exceptional children is the assumption that everyone involved in the instruction of children, particularly teachers and administrators at all levels, will accept the principle that all children should be educated in a normal, or as near to normal, setting as possible. Without this setting, together with competent instruction to meet individual needs, attempts to provide successfully for exceptional children in the regular classroom will founder.

Acceptance, on the part of the regular classroom teacher, will depend upon the teacher's knowledge of exceptional children and the extent to which the teacher feels competent in a diagnostic/prescriptive/instructional capacity. Resistance will come from those teachers who feel professionally inadequate for the purpose or from otherwise capable teachers who find that supportive assistance is not provided.

The detrimental effects of labeling and classifying, the misuse of psychometric tests (and, in some cases, the unreliability of test results), together with an attitude that the cause of failure is with the child—all are irrefutable reasons for a change in the delivery of educational services to students who, at a particular time, deviate from the norm. Too often in the past has the circular argument, "John is a poor reader because he is dyslexic; John is dyslexic and therefore is a poor reader," been used by teachers as an excuse for failure to teach Johnny to read.

The efficacy of self-contained special classes has been brought into question for a number of reasons. The results of research studies

to this date have not resolved the debate between the supporters and opponents of these classes; however, the studies have not strengthened the arguments of the protagonists. If anything, they have bolstered the arguments of those educators who have sought the abolition of the classes on other grounds. Only when it is established, without doubt, that a child would benefit educationally and/or emotionally by transfer from a regular class to a self-contained special class, should that placement be effected. Prior to such a transfer, unless the child were severely handicapped, every endeavor should be made to retain him in the mainstream.

Prehm's (1974) contention that mainstreaming is not for every handicapped child, every teacher or every school, is correct, as is his statement that the handicapped children to be mainstreamed will come from the categories previously designated as mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed and learning disabled. His statement assumes that children who are partially sighted or who have hearing loss should already be in regular classrooms and benefiting from the use of special aids.

If the mainstreaming of handicapped children is to be successful, the professional quality of teachers, both regular and special, will be the major concern. Intensive in-service training of teachers would be essential to equip them to cope with a wider range of abilities in the classroom, to identify children with learning problems at an early stage and to take appropriate remedial action. Rarely in such classrooms should be heard the statement: "That non-reader needs a specialist."

Back-up support that provides diagnostic-prescriptive and/or behavior modification assistance should be available to regular classroom

teachers on request. These services would be given by competent special educators, but the responsibility for the instruction of the child would be with the classroom teacher. Reger (1974) makes a pertinent comment on specialist advice:

Consultation services to teaching personnel should have direct application to the instructional program, providing materials to use, techniques to try and management strategies. Consultant personnel whose major offering is high status with limited or no recommendations that can be translated directly into useful action, should not be used. (p. 59)

Mainstreaming would not be as advantageous for severely handicapped children (e.g., trainable mentally retarded) as a full-time special class or special school. Considerations such as the need for long-term planning in the one educational environment (continuity would not be available in a three-stage public school system), the direct link between schooling and vocational training if future employment is a possibility, the restricted social relationships these children develop, and the advantage for the parents of belonging to an association in which common problems and solutions may be shared, cannot be overlooked when the transfer of a severely handicapped child to a public school is proposed.

Attempts at mainstreaming exceptional children would be unsuccessful without the acceptance and involvement of the staff. At the same time, a school would have to be large enough so that the special education segment of it formed a minor part; otherwise, the opportunities for "normalization" would be limited. The

special education system is in a unique position to serve as developmental capital in an overall effort to upgrade the effectiveness of the total public education effort,

and is able:

. . . to throw a spotlight on education's need to think in terms of outcomes as well as input and process criteria. Special education can organize and conduct itself as a tool for developing more instructional approaches for the hard to teach in regular as well as special education.

(Deno, 1970, pp. 231-232)

The time will come in the near future when the word "special" is deleted from "special education" and schools provide multi-stream programs conducted by educators who are competent at all levels of instruction in their schools. The "deviants" at both extremes of the intellectual continuum would be the beneficiaries as well as the "normals."

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